

S.B.176 – Should Do More, Sooner, Especially for Condominiums

Energy and Technology Committee

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I have lived in a Meadow Hill condominium for 19 years and was on the Executive Board for 14 years, 6 as President. These are my own views.

The view from space:

- From sea-level rise, shrinking ice, to floods, hurricanes, droughts, and wildfires, and now Ukraine. It should be clear to all that we need to do everything within reason to fight climate change and increase independence from fossil fuels.
- Connecticut is way behind in its energy independence goals, way behind Europe and neighboring states including NY and even MA which is on the same grid with Eversource.
- Meanwhile we resist solar and wind with the same fears that are proven myths everywhere else.

The view from my condominium and former boardroom:

- I consider myself lucky and privileged to have learned about the community solar prototype in Bloomfield just in time. I have been helping the environment, reducing global warming, increasing energy independence, and saving money on my electric bill.
- Community solar was proven successful in other states, even before the unnecessary prototype. Meanwhile others await Connecticut's tentative next steps.
- Condominiums are otherwise hampered in adoption of solar. The programs are not open to individual units or associations.
 - There is a bill tomorrow in a PD hearing for association solar, that specifically excludes condominiums.
 - Many condominium units do not have their own roofs, especially high-rise associations.
 - Many share a roof. I have my own roof, but like most condominiums it is owned by the association and solar would make me responsible for the roof if my association would go along.
 - In any case there are no solar programs with all the homeowner discounts for condominiums.
 - Meanwhile our association owns several buildings fully, yet those use little electricity and thus don't qualify, and of course they are not unit owner owned. Are condominiums actually treated like small business or other business subject to the Non-Stock Corporations Act as far as solar is concerned?

My requests:

- Catch up rapidly with other neighboring states with regard to solar – make plans to actually meet Connecticut's energy independence goals. While we are at it, catch up with Europe and other far-away places like NY and Canada in wind power.
- Consider condominiums as an included source of solar in programs for homeowners and businesses – especially for community solar and programs where businesses do not need to use most of or any of what they generate – we are just another of those places like warehouses and parking lots, a bit better than open fields.
- Consider that associations could, with individual owners' approval, install solar on some unit roofs and reap the benefits for all owners, just like many other businesses could as proposed here.
- While it is good to support solar for low-income homeowners and depressed areas, we need all the solar we can get everywhere, including apartments where shared solar and rooftops are available – and less space taken from urban areas.

Thank you.